

Message Text

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TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, IS, US, EG

SUBJECT:INTERIM AGREEMENT AND POLARIZATION IN ISRAELI
DOMESTIC POLITICS

REF: TEL AVIV 4448

USDEL FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON

1. VIEWS OF ISRAELI JOURNALISTS REPORTED REFTEL RE SIGNS
OF GROWING FISSURES IN LABOR PARTY LEAD US TO FOLLOWING
ANALYSIS, WHICH IS NECESSARILY PRELIMINARY PENDING RECEIPT
OF EMBASSY TEL AVIV'S JUDGMENT OF SITUATION.

2. HARIF'S ASSESSMENT THAT THE MAIN ISSUE FOR THE ISRAELIS
NOW IS NOT ONE BETWEEN JERUSALEM AND WASHINGTON BUT IS
BETWEEN TWO CONTENDING SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT WITHIN ISRAELI
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LEADERSHIP IS IN OUR OPINION PROBABLY CORRECT. WE SUSPECT

ISRAELIS BELIEVE THEY WILL PROBABLY NOT SUCCEED IN GETTING FURTHER CHANGES IN EITHER THE EGYPTIAN OR THE US POSITION RE TERMS FOR A NEW SINAI ACCORD. DISPUTE WITHIN ISRAELI LEADERSHIP THEREFORE MUST BE OVER EFFECT ON US-ISRAELI RELATIONS OF REJECTING PROPOSED SINAI AGREEMENT, WITH PERES TAKING POSITION THAT ISRAEL CAN WEATHER THE STORM AND COME OUT IN END WITH US MATERIAL AND POLITICAL SUPPORT IT NEEDS, ALLON ARGUING THIS WOULD BE TOO DANGEROUS AND THAT ISRAEL SHOULD REGARD FRESH US ASSURANCES OF FUTURE SUPPORT--WHICH ISRAEL MUST NAIL DOWN AS PART OF PROCESS--AS COMPENSATING FOR MEAGRENESS OF EGYPTIAN CONCESSIONS, AND RABIN KEEPING MUM BUT PERHAPS INCLINING TOWARD PERES' VIEW. REASON WHY WE ESTIMATE RABIN IS UNWILLING TO DISMISS PERES' VIEW IS HIS CONCERN OVER THE SECOND ISSUE, BESIDES NEED FOR US AID TO ISRAEL, ON WHICH LEADERSHIP PROBABLY ARGUING AS TO HOW BEST TO HANDLE AMERICANS, VIZ. SECOND-STAGE GOLAN ACCORD.

3. THUS ISSUES WHICH WE FEEL ARE AT CORE OF FERMENT WITHIN LABOR PARTY ARE (A) HOW TO SECURE US MILITARY, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SUPPORT AND (B) HOW TO AVOID NEED IN FORESEEABLE FUTURE TO MAKE HARD DECISIONS RE GOLAN HEIGHTS. IT IS WORTH RECALLING THAT CHAIRMAN OF KNESSET FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY COMMITTEE TOLD OUR CHARGE IN TEL AVIV JULY 2 THAT RABIN'S VIEWS ON INTERIM AGREEMENT WILL BE DECISIVE AND THAT RABIN RECENTLY HAD BEEN STRESSING IMPORTANCE OF US RELATIONSHIP TO ISRAEL IN OVERALL CALCULATION OF ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES WHICH DEAL WITH EGYPT WOULD POSE IN ISRAELI EYES. ASSUMING THAT LIKELY TERMS OF INTERIM AGREEMENT ARE DISTASTEFUL TO ALL THREE MEMBERS OF ISRAELI NEGOTIATING TEAM, DECISION FOR OR AGAINST IS LIKELY TO BE MADE ON BASIS OF TRIUMVERATE'S ESTIMATE, BUT PARTICULARLY RABIN'S, OF WHETHER OR NOT ISRAEL CAN GET AID AND POLITICAL SUPPORT IT NEEDS FROM US PUBLIC AND CONGRESS IF IT SAYS "NO" TO ADMINISTRATION.

4. ALLON OVER PAST FEW DAYS SEEMS TO FAVOR AGREEMENT. WE NOTE THAT ON JULY 9 HE TOLD KNESSET THAT PROGRESS TOWARD AGREEMENT CAN BE MADE ON BASIS OF A "FIRM TRIANGLE" OF ASSURANCES FROM US TO ISRAEL, CONCESSIONS BY EGYPT, AND CONFIDENTIAL

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UNDERTAKINGS BY ISRAEL. MEDIA INDICATE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT SOURCES PURSUED THIS LINE THE NEXT DAY, SAYING THAT US IS NOW ACTIVE PARTNER RATHER THAN JUST MEDIATOR IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. BY CONTRAST, PERES ON JULY 11 SEEMED TO BE TAKING A HARDER LINE, PERHAPS POSITIONING HIMSELF FOR OUTRIGHT OPPOSITION TO AN AGREEMENT ALONG LINES DESCRIBED BY MATTI GOLAN (REFTEL), WHEN HE SAID TO JOURNALISTS THAT ISRAEL SHOULD NOT GIVE UP PASSES FOR WHAT EGYPT IS

OFFERING AND SHOULD NOT AGREE TO A DEAL UNDER DEADLINE PRESSURES. PERES DID NOT MAKE ANY REFERENCE TO US ASSURANCES TO ISRAEL OF FUTURE SUPPORT, EITHER AS COMPENSATORY FACTOR IN NEGOTIATING EQUATION OR AS PROBLEM FOR ISRAEL IN DECIDING WHAT TO DO IN NEGOTIATIONS. IT MAY BE THAT PERES FEELS ISRAEL CAN SAY "NO" TO EGYPTIAN OFFER AND STILL GET WHAT IT NEEDS FROM CONGRESS.

5. PERES ALSO REFERRED TO SYRIA, ACCORDING TO JULY 11

REPORT OF HIS VIEWS, SUGGESTING THAT ISRAEL SHOULD MAKE PARALLEL DEAL WITH SYRIA AT SAME TIME AS WITH EGYPT, AS OTHERWISE AGREEMENT WITH EGYPT COULD BECOME IMMEDIATELY DESTABILIZING. PERES MAY BE SIGNALLING THAT, SINCE THERE IS LITTLE ROOM FOR DEAL WITH SYRIA, AN AGREEMENT WITH EGYPT SHOULD BE POSTPONED IN ORDER AVOID US PRESSURE SOON THEREAFTER FOR A MOVE ON GOLAN HEIGHTS. ALTHOUGH WE ARE NOT AWARE OF ANYTHING RABIN HAS SAID RE SYRIAN ELEMENT IN SINAI NEGOTIATING PICTURE WHICH GOES THIS FAR, WE SUSPECT THAT RABIN TOO IS CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBILITY US MIGHT CALL ON ISRAEL TO TRY TO CONCLUDE SECOND-STAGE GOLAN AGREEMENT SOON AFTER SIGNING NEW INTERIM AGREEMENT WITH EGYPT. INGERSOLL

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